

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for controlling the distribution of expiring free postage in a PC postage system, comprising the steps
5 of:

transferring a first portion of said expiring free postage to a postage meter;

storing a second portion of said expiring free postage in a free postage account; and

10 resetting balance of said free postage account upon expiration of said free postage.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of establishing minimum threshold for said postage meter and
15 transferring a block of postage from said free postage account to said postage meter when balance of said postage meter is less than or equal to said threshold.

3. The method of claim 2 further comprising the step of
20 decrementing said free postage account in accordance with said block of transferred postage.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of storing purchased postage in an available postage account.

25 5. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of utilizing said expiring free postage before said purchased postage.

30 6. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of displaying sum of total expiring free postage and purchased postage in an available postage field.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprising the step of decrementing said available postage field in accordance with a print transaction.

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8. The method of claim 7 further comprising the step of utilizing said expiring free postage before said purchased postage.

10 9. The method of claim 1 further comprising notifying user upon expiration of said free postage.

10. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of storing purchased postage and balance of the postage meter
15 in a descending register.

11. The method of claim 10 further comprising the step of decrementing descending register in accordance with a print transaction.

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12. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of determining whether postage meter balance is equal to or greater than a predetermined threshold.

25 13. The method of claim 12 further comprising the step of transferring a block of free postage from said free postage account to said postage meter in accordance with said threshold determination.

30 14. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of determining validity of said expiring free postage in response to receipt of a print postage request and wherein

said free postage account is reset in accordance with said validity determination.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising the step of
5 determining whether balance of said free postage is equal
to or greater than value of requested postage and
transferring a block of free postage from said free postage
account to said postage meter in accordance with the amount
determination.

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16. The method of claim 15 further comprising the step of
decrementing said free postage account in accordance with
the transferred postage.

15 17. The method of claim 15 further comprising the step of
generating print image in accordance with said amount
determination.

18. The method of claim 14 further comprising the step of
20 determining whether balance of total purchased postage and
free postage is equal to or greater than value of requested
postage.

19. The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of
25 generating error message in accordance with said amount
determination.

20. The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of
generating print image in accordance with said amount
30 determination.

21. A method for controlling the distribution of expiring free postage in a PC postage system, comprising the steps of:

5 storing said expiring free postage in a free postage account;

 transferring a portion of said expiring free postage from said free postage account to a postage meter in accordance with a print postage request; and

10 resetting balance of said free postage account upon expiration of said free postage.

22. The method of claim 21 further comprising the step of decrementing said free postage account in accordance with said transferred postage.

15 23. The method of claim 21 further comprising the step of displaying sum of the expiring free postage and purchased postage in an available postage field.

20 24. The method of claim 23 further comprising the step of decrementing said available postage field in accordance with a print transaction.

25 25. The method of claim 24 further comprising the step of utilizing said expiring free postage before said purchased postage.

30 26. The method of claim 21 further comprising the steps of determining validity of said expiring free postage in response to receipt of said print postage request, wherein said free postage account is reset in accordance with said validity determination.

27. The method of claim 26 further comprising the step of determining whether balance of free postage account is equal to or greater than value of requested postage and
5 wherein the step of transferring a portion of the expiring free postage to said postage meter comprises transferring a portion of the expiring free postage in accordance with the amount determination.

10 28. The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of decrementing said free postage account in accordance with the transferred postage.

15 29. The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of generating print image in accordance with said amount determination.

20 30. The method of claim 26 further comprising the step of determining whether balance of total purchased postage and free postage is equal to or greater than value of requested postage.

25 31. The method of claim 30 further comprising the step of generating error message in accordance with said amount determination.

32. The method of claim 30 further comprising the step of generating print image in accordance with said amount determination.

33. A PC postage system, comprising:

means for storing expiring free postage in a free postage account;

5 means for transferring a portion of said expiring free postage from said free postage account to a postage meter in accordance with a print postage request; and

means for resetting balance of said free postage account upon expiration of said free postage.

10 34. The PC postage system of claim 33 further comprising means for decrementing said free postage account in accordance with said transferred postage.

15 35. The PC postage system of claim 33 further comprising means for displaying sum of the expiring free postage and purchased postage in an available postage field.

20 36. PC postage system of claim 35 further comprising means for decrementing said available postage field in accordance with a print transaction.

25 37. The PC postage system of claim 33 further comprising means for determining validity of said expiring free postage in response to receipt of said print postage request, wherein said free postage account is reset in accordance with said validity determination.